The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Fight INFANTILE PARALYSIS

JANUARY 14-31

The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis

WHOLE NO. 1816 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1946 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 36, NO. 5

Green Lauds Return To Job of AFL Butcher Workmen

Miami—AFL President William Green warmly commended the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America for having ordered its men back to work in the packing plants after government seizure. He said:

"I have just been officially notified by President Earl W. Jimerson and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick E. Gorman of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America that they have ordered 70,000 striking members to return to work in the packing plants now taken over by the government.

"This is a thoroughly wise decision, in keeping with the policy of the American Federation of Labor.

"We do not believe that any union can strike against the government of the United States.

"The officers of the union informed me that continuation of the strike after government seizure of the packing plants would have brought about disastrous results.

"The workers would have suffered severe losses in wage income, whereas they can now expect that their wage dispute with the industry will be decided on its merits by the fact-finding board investigating the case and that any wage increase determined will be made retroactive to the date of seizure.

"Instead of incurring widespread criticism by denying meat to soldiers stationed overseas, inconveniencing our entire population and causing disastrous losses to farmers, cattle raisers and cattle feeders, the returning workers will earn the good will and sympathy of the public.

"I congratulate the officers of this American Federation of Labor union for their patriotic and courageous decision to cooperate with the government and the public."

Wider Social Insurance Program Proposed By Board In Tenth Report

Washington, D. C.—In its tenth annual report to Congress, the Social Security Board outlined an over-all social insurance program of vital interests to workers and their families.

The board's major recommendations may be summarized as follows:

Old-Age and Survivors Insurance

The board has recommended an increase in benefit amounts under this program, particularly for low-paid workers. It has suggested that women workers become eligible for retirement benefits at 60, instead of 65 as the law now reads. Elderly workers would be permitted to earn up to $30 a month without forfeiting their old-age benefits. The present limit is $14.99. The program would be extended to cover farm, domestic, and public workers, employes of non-profit organizations and self-employed persons, including farmers. The board has also asked Congress to see that servicemen receive credit towards old-age and survivors insurance for their period of service in the armed forces.

Unemployment Insurance

The Social Security Board believes that unemployment insurance can best be administered as part of an overall national insurance system and not, as at present, under 48 different state laws.

However, given the present federal-state system, the board would impose stricter requirements on state unemployment insurance laws so that requirements would include extending unemployment insurance to cover as many outside groups as possible. On the basis of past earnings, workers would receive a maximum of at least $25 a week for 26 weeks, if they should be out of work that long. No state would be able to cancel or reduce a worker's benefits if he left his job without good cause or was discharged for misconduct, or if he refused to accept a suitable job while unemployed. The maximum penalty recommended by the board would be a postponement of his benefits for two weeks. A worker would not be disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits if he quit or refused work for good personal reasons.

Such standards as these would help correct many of the inequalities that now exist under the 48 widely varying state unemployment insurance systems.

Disability and Health Insurance

Two major threats to a worker's economic security still receive no protection under the present Social Security system. The Social Security Board has asked Congress to cover these two risks: sickness and disability.

What would this new kind of insurance mean to a worker if he became sick? He and his family would receive cash benefits to make up a portion of his lost wages. If he should become permanently disabled and no longer able to work, then he would receive benefits similar to those paid under old-age retirement. In addition, the board would protect against the costs of medical care. That would include doctor and hospital bills.

A National Insurance System

From its 10 years of experience in the field of social insurance, the Social Security Board has in this year's annual report outlined a comprehensive national system of social insurance. Such insurance would cover all the major risks to economic security. Likewise, it would cover all workers and their dependents in case such risks apply.

It would be hoped that such insurance would greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the need for public assistance. But insofar as this need exists, the board would strengthen and vastly improve public assistance program to enable needy people to receive financial aid, irrespective of the reason for the need or the place of residence.

To put over all social insurance program, as outlined by the board, would prove a vital contribution to the public's economic independence and to the nation's prosperity.

AFL Union Accorded Recognition To Represent N. Y. City Workers

New York City.—William J. Powell, Commissioner of the Department of Sanitation, issued a special order informing department employes that units of the American Federation of Labor would be recognized as official unions for them.

The order was taken as a slap at the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which has been active among the 9,000 employes of the Sanitation Department.

Mr. Powell said that 80 to 90 per cent of the personnel in the Sanitation Department had been affiliated with AFL units. He declared that the order was in keeping with the policy of the department for the last 8 years.

The labor policy of the Sanitation Department differs somewhat from that of the Board of Transportation. In the latter department, the commissioner has dealt with as many as 16 spokesmen from various labor units who are employed by the rapid transit lines. This was the result of the unification of the city's subway, elevated, bus and street car lines.

It was explained at Mr. Powell's office that while his assistants would have a chance to listen also to assertions of union members on their respective plants about wages and hours must come through AFL channels. Mr. Powell said the AFL had been in control of the working force in the Sanitation Department for a number of years.

There was no comment about the order from Mayor O'Dwyer's office.

The order follows:

"The organizations making up the joint board of sanitation locals of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 111, Boroughs of Manhattan and Richmond, Elias Shapiro, president; Local 238, Borough of Brooklyn, Anthony Gregg, president; Local 508, Borough of the Bronx, John DeLeary, president; Local 750, all boroughs, James Dugan, president.

"The department will recognize only the heads of the above mentioned organizations as the duly authorized representatives of the men and will confer with them on problems relating to their working conditions."

N. Y. COURTS SWAMPED BY PRICE CHISELERS

DAN TRACY RESIGNS FROM LABOR DEPT. POST

New York City—The amazing number of businessmen who put profits above law and patriotism was illustrated here when, in one day, the Office of Price Administration took full cudgel into violation cases before Magistrate Charles E. Ramsgate.

That was too many for him to handle, so he called in another Judge to take part of the load. Even then, many of the cases had to be postponed.

Among those charged with boosting prices and rents above the OPA limit were grocers, butchers, other retailers, apartment house owners and rooming house proprietors.

Washington, D. C.—Dan W. Tracy, former president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, resigned as First Assistant Secretary of Labor following a long but futile effort to reorganize the Department of Labor on more efficient lines.

Mr. Tracy gave no reason for his resignation after more than 2 years' service under Secretaries Perkins and Schwellenbach, but newspapers reported he was fed up with lack of authority and with having his recommendations sidetracked.

United Mine Workers Reaffiliate With AFL; Green Predicts Others Will Follow Suit

Price Control Must Stay

Miami—The American Federation of Labor's Executive Council called upon Congress to extend and continue price and rent controls for another year to prevent the disastrous effects of inflation." Text of the council's declaration follows:

America is already afflicted with a high spending fever—the unmistakable first symptom of inflation. The flush of false prosperity can be detected not only in Wall Street but in every grocery store in the nation. Prompt action is required to check the infection.

Past experience has taught us that economic upheavals travel in the wake of wars. The uncontrolled boom which followed World War One collapsed in 1929 with a shock which upset the entire world's economy. In America the ensuing depression lasted for seven years until a new war started. Our country must not embark upon that disastrous cycle again.

Basic conditions are ripe for another economic spree. The American people, starved during the war for necessities and comforts which modern civilization provides, are stampeding empty markets, begging for a chance to spend their savings in a hurry. Speculative activities and luxury spending are reaching new heights. Pressure for higher prices obtains powerful support from the shortages of supplies and materials which inevitably will continue for many months, until production for peacetime needs reaches greater volume.

Under these circumstances, it would be suicidal for our government to drop price controls on June 30, when the present law expires.

President Truman has asked Congress to extend the law for another year, until June 30, 1947. The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor supports that recommendation. It also urges that action be taken promptly because uncertainty as to future policy already is slowing down production because of the reluctance of business to make advance commitments in the dark.

Let it be clearly understood, however, that the American Federation of Labor regards price control as a necessary evil. In normal times we would vigorously oppose any such government interference with a free economy. Even now, controls should be exercised cautiously and selectively. The most production of any particular article comes within safe range of meeting the demand for it, the Office of Price Administration should remove its arbitrary ceilings and let the natural competitive forces bring the selling price down to its natural level.

The administration of price control during and after the war has been spotty and needs to be tightened up. Even with price control, the government admits the cost of living has gone up 30 percent since 1941. The actual figure is closer to 50 percent, in our opinion, because of the devious artifices by which the law has been evaded and the public victimized.

Despite the many obvious failures of price control, the American people realize how much worse they would have fared without it. They also understand how dangerous it would be to drop price controls now. For example, rent control, which has been fairly successfully enforced, would burst right through the roof because of the acute housing shortage.

It has been argued that price controls cannot be maintained without parallel wage controls. The impression seems to be that the government has dropped wage controls. This is not the case. The government's policy, administered by the War Wage Stabilization Board, forbids the granting of wage increases which would be used as the basis for an employer's demand for a higher price ceiling. Departures from this rule will be made only in exceptional hardship cases.

Loan To Britain Endorsed

Miami—Endorsement of economic measures, such as the proposed loan to Great Britain, to restore a stabilized and prosperous world economy, was expressed by the AFL Executive Council in the following statement:

America's problems of postwar rehabilitation appear insignificant by comparison with the vast clean-up task confronting the people of Europe. Ravaged by war, drained of natural resources, their productive machinery largely in ruins and lacking even an adequate supply of food and clothing to meet immediate needs, the nations of Europe have a long, hard, uphill fight before they can hope to get back to a normal peacetime basis.

These conditions, in a rapidly ameliorated, will provide a fertile soil for unrest, revolution and international upheavals which would make themselves dangerously felt on this side of the Atlantic.

America's desire for lasting world peace is unquestioned. The sharp change since World War One in public sentiment for international cooperation is indicated by votes taken in Congress.

But the American people have not yet grasped or accepted the broad responsibilities which we must undertake as a nation to further the cause of world peace.

It is not enough for us to maintain occupation forces in conquered nations, to help the United Nations Organization, to agree to contribute our share to an international police force. Peace may be maintained by military force temporarily and protected by military measures but it depends basically on a stable, prosperous economy which provides the opportunity for each nation to establish a decent standard of living for its people.

Financially, Britain is down and out. Spiritually, she has just begun to fight. Without the loan which is now in prayer, she will be unable to hold off the common enemy and provided our first line of defense during the initial stage of battle.

Sympathetic as we are to the British people, the proposed loan should not be considered on a sentimental basis. It is a business proposition. It will help to restore Great Britain as a prewar day, Britain was one of America's greatest customers. In the years to come, we must restore that large volume of trade for our own benefit. To do that we must help our good customer and loyal ally to reorganize her economy.

Furthermore, Britain constitutes the last and most powerful bastion of democracy in Europe. The British way of life comes closer to our ideas of the value of individual life and freedom than any other. We cannot afford to let that way of life be snuffed out by economic ruin.

The mission sent to Great Britain, negotiated by the representatives of our own country and the British government and now awaiting Congressional approval, is a step toward improving and stabilizing a workable world economy.

Liberal Laws Approved

Miami—The AFL Executive Council renewed its pleas to Congress for prompt passage of legislation to protect the well-being and security of the great masses of the American people during reconversion. The council's recommendations, which have been repeatedly endorsed by President Truman, follow:

First of the measures on the American Federation of Labor's program is the immediate passage of legislation which calls for federal supplementation of inadequate state allowances to provide maximum benefits of $25 a week for 26 weeks for those who are forced out of jobs through no fault of their own.

Secondly, we urge enactment of the Full Employment bill which would make it the government's policy to encourage private enterprise to sustain a high level of employment and would take up the slack through necessary public works projects if industry does not create sufficient job opportunities.

Third, we propose immediate lifting of the minimum wage level to 65 cents an hour through amendment of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The present statutory minimum is 40 cents an hour but decisions of the National War Labor Board have raised that average level to 55 cents. The additional 10 cents an hour is necessary to help millions of low-paid workers to meet higher living costs and it is vital to the prosperity of the entire country as a new foundation of purchasing power.

Fourth, the American Federation of Labor seeks the adoption of a wider and more effective social security program, including insurance against the high cost of medical care. The health of the nation and the future of America is at stake in this program. There is a desperate need for more adequate medical care among low-income groups who cannot afford the high cost of private medical treatment even when they are ill except through prepaid insurance administered by the government.

BREWERY WORKERS SEEK RETURN TO FEDERATION

Miami.—Moves for reaffiliation of the United Brewery and Soft Drink Workers Union with the AFL are under way here.

AFL President William Green announced receipt of a telegram from William J. Kronelbein, general secretary-treasurer of the union, requesting an opportunity for its 3 top officials to come here to discuss with the executive council the jurisdiction dispute with the Teamsters Union which led to the suspension of the Brewery Workers. Mr. Green promptly replied that the council would be glad to give the union officials a hearing.

The Brewery Workers Union was suspended in 1939 after it failed to comply with a convention decision on the jurisdiction dispute which involved beer truck drivers. It is one of the oldest and most respected unions in the nation and its return to the AFL would be a welcome development.

COURT RULES OUT SUPERSENIORITY

Miami.—AFL Chief Counsel Joseph A. Padway reported to the executive council that labor has won a major test case in the courts against supersenionity.

The decision rendered by Federal Judge Charles B. Briggle at Springfield, Ill., Padway said, will remove a great source of irritation and dispute in industrial relations and clarify the position of returning veterans.

"The decision was so well reasoned," Padway added, "that I am confident it will be sustained by the Circuit Court of Appeals and by the United States Supreme Court, if it gets there."

The case involved employes of Olin Industries, Inc., serviced by unions in the Western Cartridge Company at East Alton, Ill.

This company, whose working force jumped from 2,500 employes to 12,000 during the war and has now been reduced to the prewar figure, asked the federal court for a declaratory judgment on the seniority rights of returning veterans as interpreted at the plant.

The American Federation of Labor intervened in the case as a defendant and the case was argued by Herbert Thatcher, associated with Mr. Padway's office.

On one side were ranged nonveteran employes who had joined up since World War One. Opposing them were World War Two veterans who claimed that the seniority rights granted them by the selective service act entitled them to superseniority over the longer seniority. This view was also taken by General Hershey, Director of Selective Service.

Judge Briggle, however, ruled that regardless of war service, an employe who worked for a company, for example, could not justly claim greater seniority and job rights than a non-veteran employe who had served the company for 25 years.

The court also held that employes hired during the war who later entered the armed forces were actually temporary employes of the company and are not entitled to seniority rights above the permanent employes at the plant.

Judge Briggle emphasized in his decision that the seniority system is the "cornerstone of harmonious relations between labor and industry" and that Congress did not intend to overthrow seniority in protecting the job rights of those who entered the service.

Everyone is agreed, the decision continued, that returning ex-servicemen should receive special consideration in the armed forces, but their rights cannot be thereby advanced and they cannot be accorded any undue advantage over other employes. The decision said:

"His (the returning veteran's) status qua with accumulated seniority was provided for and definitely preserved. He was to suffer no handicaps in his employment relation by reason of his military service. In short, he was to get his own job back if it was in existence, or to get the job of another with longer period of service. A different construction would not certainly create such an unrest and upheaval in industrial relations as would retard economic recovery and be of no lasting benefit to anyone, including the veteran."

John L. Lewis Named To AFL Executive Council In Biggest Labor Development Of Year

Miami—The United Mine Workers of America, one of the largest and strongest unions in the nation, is back in the American Federation of Labor.

Acceptance of the union's bid for reaffiliation of its 600,000 members was completed here by the AFL Executive Council and announced by President William Green.

The council also elected John L. Lewis, head of the mine workers, to the 13th vice presidency of the federation.

The return of the UMW to the AFL fold which it had left 10 years ago to form the nucleus of the CIO constituted the biggest and most significant labor development of the year.

"It will have a profound effect," Mr. Green declared at a press conference. "It is an important step toward the development of a united labor movement in America. We are hopeful that other unions that left us will now follow the United Mine Workers' example."

Confirmation of Mr. Green's prediction came almost immediately. It was announced that 8 top representatives of the United Brewery and Soft Drink Workers Union are coming here to discuss terms of reaffiliation with the AFL at a meeting with the Executive Council. This union, with its 50,000 members, was suspended in 1939 when it refused to abide by a convention decision regarding a jurisdictional conflict with the Teamsters Union over truck drivers.

Mr. Green, elated by these developments, took advantage of a question at his press conference to scotch unfounded propaganda that he his personal future.

"The story that I am planning to retire is false," he stated emphatically. "I am going to continue as President of the American Federation of Labor."

Negotiations for the return of the United Mine Workers Union had been in progress for 2 years, following the union's withdrawal from the CIO which it helped to found.

A year ago plans for reaffiliation were agreed to by both sides but failed of completion when Mr. Lewis insisted on representation on the Executive Council at a time when there were no vacancies.

The recent suspension of the International Association of Machinists for failure to pay per capita tax provided a new opening on the Executive Council which was forced to declare the seat of Machinist President Harvey W. Brown vacant. Mr. Lewis was elected to fill this vacancy. In the past when the United Mine Workers were affiliated with the federation, Mr. Lewis served on the Executive Council for a number of terms.

The reaffiliation proposal accepted by the Executive Council provides that the union shall return at once with all its members. This step was formalized when the union gave its check for $9,000 to Secretary-Treasurer George Meany to cover per capita tax for the month of January.

The next step will be the arrangement of conferences between UMW officials and representatives of other affiliated unions which they are in transgressions upon their jurisdiction. It is hoped that most jurisdictional questions can be ironed out by agreement at such conferences. If not, Mr. Lewis has agreed that any issues remaining in dispute shall be decided finally by the Executive Council.

Other major developments since the opening session of the mid-winter Executive Council meeting included:

1—An appeal to Congress to continue price controls for another year so that the purchasing power of the worker's wage dollar can be protected and inflation prevented.

2—Endorsement of the proposed loan to Great Britain as a step toward development of a stable world trade and a workable international economy.

3—Announcement that the AFL will not participate in the liquidation of the International Federation of Trade Unions which has been dissolved because of the refusal of the Soviet-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions. The AFL will have nothing to do with this latter organization.

4—Conferences with representatives of the Cuban Confederation of Labor for the purpose of developing a free and strong trade union movement in Latin America.

This week the Executive Council will resume its session with Mr. Lewis in attendance.

It is expected that a new and intensified organization campaign will be launched for the purpose of stimulating the trend toward unity in the labor movement by the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Green pointed out that the United Mine Workers is the second major union to have described the full circle of leaving the AFL to join the CIO, then withdrawing from the CIO to return to the AFL.

Other federation officials freely expressed the belief that additional unions now in the CIO can be expected to follow suit.

Letters Outline Specific Terms Of UMW Reaffiliation With AFL

Miami—AFL President William Green made public 3 letters from John L. Lewis which constituted the United Mine Workers Union's application for reaffiliation with the AFL. These communications were only the most recent ones of a long series. The first letter, dated Feb. 10, 1945, follows:

"Acknowledgement is hereby made of the receipt of your letter of February 9, which expresses the suggestions of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor with respect to the possible reaffiliation of the United Mine Workers of America.

"The United Mine Workers of America are conscious that the American Federation of Labor has rules and laws covering affiliates which are binding upon such affiliates as they are chartered by the American Federation of Labor. In consequence, I am authorized to say that the United Mine Workers of America will at once reenter the American Federation of Labor with its entire membership.

"When the charter of reaffiliation is issued to the United Mine Workers of America, representatives of this organization will be willing to meet with representatives of the American Federation of Labor, or any of its affiliates, to discuss the question of any jurisdictional claim that may be filed, to the end that harmony with the customary procedure and the existing laws and rules of the American Federation of Labor. Acceptance of a charter of reaffiliation with the American Federation of Labor by the United Mine Workers of America is contingent upon being given its usual representation on the Executive Council."

The second letter dated Jan. 12, 1946, said:

"On Feb. 10, 1945, this office, in behalf of the United Mine Workers of America, addressed you a letter for presentation to the American Council of the American Federation of Labor stating the conditions affecting possible reaffiliation. Copy of the letter in question is hereby attached.

"I reaffirm statements made in the aforesaid letter and advise that reaffiliation at this time upon the described terms would be satisfactory to the United Mine Workers of America."

The final letter was dated Jan. 17, 1946 and said:

"Supplementing letter sent you on Saturday, Jan. 12, affecting reaffiliation of the United Mine Workers of America with the American Federation of Labor, I am herewith enclosing United Mine Workers' check in the amount of $9,000, signed by International Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Kennedy, in payment of tax on 600,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America for the month of January, 1946.

"This payment, of course, is contingent upon consummation of affiliation.

"We assume that this is the correct amount, but if not, any necessary adjustment can be made by Secretary Kennedy and Secretary

THE AFL PRESENTS . . .

"AMERICA UNITED"
At 1:15 P.M., EWT, Over NBC

Date	Topic	Panel Members
Feb. 3	Need for Health Insurance	Nelson Crulkshank, AFL Senator Pepper, of Florida Russell Smith, National Farmers Union
Feb. 10	Long-Range Home Plans	Boris Shishkin, AFL Senator Wagner, of New York Russell Smith, National Farmers Union